

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

GREETINGS FROM THE REVOLUTION

By Pastor Brian De Jong

It is almost impossible to ignore the fact that our country is experiencing a fast-paced and multifaceted revolution. Change is coming fast and furious from numerous directions.

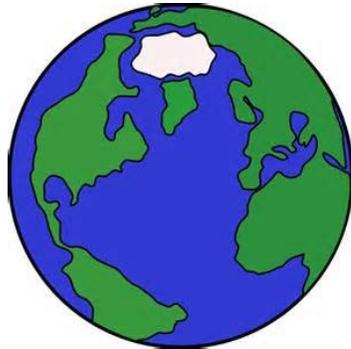
We see this within our political landscape, where the rule of law is increasingly under siege. Constitutional restraints, and the separation of powers are routinely ignored and disrespected. The will of the majority is being denied by activist judges. The courts are legislating from the bench, though our founders never envisioned such a system.

On the international scene we observe an increasingly aggressive form of Islamic terrorism. Kidnappings, cold blooded murder, torture and internet beheadings are in the headlines with increasing frequency. Most often Christians are the victims of the Islamofascists. On the one hand we are encouraged to respect Islam as a religion of peace and brotherhood, and on the other we are taught to fear Islam as one of the most vitriolic ideologies in the modern world.

There is also moral upheaval in the area of marriage and sexuality. One's gender is determined not by genetics, but by how they feel when they wake up on any given morning. If you feel like a girl today, then you're a girl. If tomorrow you wake up and feel more masculine, then you can change and be a boy tomorrow. It's all up to you what gender you want to be. (I'm not making this up!)

Perhaps one of the most dangerous

areas of change is in the public redefinition of marriage. Leaving behind the time-honored model of one man and one woman, united in a covenantal bond of commitment and dedication, our society increasingly prefers casual and temporary arrangements between two consenting persons to do whatever they desire. There is no commitment made, and no expectation that such arrangements last "till death do us part."



Tied up in this moral transformation is the legitimization of homosexual activity. According to the new attitude, everyone must view homosexuality as normal, natural and even preferable. With the Supreme Court set to rule on this matter soon, legitimization could easily become the legalization of homosexuality in every sphere of American life. In the meantime, the norm of a heterosexual society becomes increasingly suspect in the eyes of the cultural elites.

According to Dr. Al Mohler, as "erotic rights" are aggressively pushed, religious liberty is the predictable loser. Thus when the fire chief of Atlanta, Georgia self-published a book of his personal views on moral issues, he was abruptly terminated. Why? Chief Kelvin Cochran had the belief that homosexuality was sin, and such behavior was condemned by the Bible. Though Cochran had done nothing meriting a complaint from his subordinates, he was not permitted to hold that opinion or to express it openly.

Other signs of change are equally...

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Mnemonics...

- *Taco Supper & Game Night, 6th*
- *Joint Service, 8th*

Gleanings

by C. H. Spurgeon

The Preciousness of the Promises.

The promises of God are to the believer an inexhaustible mine of wealth. Happy is it for him if he knows how to search out their secret veins, and enrich himself with their hid treasures. They are an armory, containing all manner of offensive and defensive weapons. Blessed is he who has learned to enter into the sacred arsenal, to put on the breastplate and the helmet, and to lay his hand to the spear and to the sword. They are a surgery, in which the believer will find all manner of restoratives and blessed elixirs; nor lacks there an ointment for every wound, a cordial for every faintness, a remedy for every disease. Blessed is he who is well skilled in heavenly pharmacy, and knoweth how to lay hold on the healing virtues of the promises of God. The promises are to the Christian a storehouse of food. They are as the granaries which Joseph built in Egypt, or as the golden pot wherein the manna was preserved. Blessed is he who can take the five barley loaves and fishes of promise, and break them till his five thousand necessities shall all be supplied, and he is able to gather up baskets full of fragments. The promises are the Christian's Magna Charta of liberty; they are the title deeds of his heavenly estate. Happy is he who knoweth how to read them well, and call them all his own. Yea, they are the jewel room in which the Christian's crown treasures are preserved. The regalia are his, secretly to admire to-day, which he shall openly wear in Paradise hereafter. He is already privileged as a king with the silver key that unlocks the strong room; he may even now grasp the scepter, wear the crown, and put upon his shoulders the imperial mantle. O, how unutterably rich are the promises of our faithful, covenant-keeping God! If we had the tongue of the mightiest of orators, and if that tongue could be touched with a live coal from off the altar, yet still it could not utter a tenth of the praises of the exceeding great and precious promises of God. Nay, they who have entered into rest, whose tongues are attuned to the lofty and rapturous elo-

quence of cherubim and seraphim, even they can never tell the height and depth, the length and breadth of the unsearchable riches of Christ, which are stored up in the treasure-house of God—the promises of the covenant of His grace.

The Christian Warfare.

It is a tough battle which the Christian is called to fight; not one which carpet knights might win; no easy skirmish which he might gain, who dashed to battle on some sunshiny day, looked at the host, then turned his courser's rein, and daintily dismounted at the door of his silken tent. It is not a campaign which he shall win, who, but a raw recruit to-day, foolishly imagines that one week of service will insure a crown of glory. It is a life-long war; a contest which will require all our strength, if we are to be triumphant; a battle at which the stoutest heart might quail; a fight from which the bravest would shrink, did he not remember that the Lord is on his side; therefore whom shall he fear? God is the strength of his life: of whom shall he be afraid? This fight is not one of main force, or physical might; if it were, we might the sooner win it; but it is all the more dangerous from the fact that it is a strife of mind, a contest of heart, a struggle of the spirit—ofttimes an agony of the soul.

Do you wonder that the Christian is called to conflict? God never gives strong faith without fiery trial; he will not build a strong ship, without subjecting it to very mighty storms; he will not make you a mighty warrior, if he does not intend to try your skill in battle. The sword of the Lord must be used; the blades of heaven must be smitten against the armor of the evil one, and yet they shall not break, for they are of true Jerusalem metal, which shall never snap. We shall conquer, if we begin the battle in the right way. If we have sharpened our swords on the cross, we have nothing whatever to fear; for though we may be sometimes cast down and discomfited, we shall assuredly at last put to flight all our adversaries, for we are the sons of God even now. Why, then, should we fear? Who shall bid us "stay," if God bid us advance?

From Gleanings among the Sheaves by C. H. Spurgeon.

Session Digest

Your Session met on Tuesday, January 13th. In addition to the normal matters, we approved the proposed 2015 budget and voted to present it to the congregation for adoption. We also discussed revising the marriage policy for the church in light of current and future social developments. The joint service with Bethel and Calvary was discussed. With mixed feelings we saw our sturdy clerk, Roger Arndt, prepare to take a year of Sabbatical. Jim Onnink has agreed to be the new clerk of Session and will take up his duties at the February meeting.



Front Page Concluded...

...disturbing, such as the legalization of marijuana in several states. The open use of this damaging drug is effecting not just adults, but children and young people. And then there is the continued strident insistence that abortion for any reason or cause is a fundamental liberty for all Americans.

And here we are – Christians seeking to live according to God’s word in an age of deepening depravity. What should we do? Perhaps Paul puts it best when he writes in Ephesians 6:13, *“Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”* Being steadfast and immovable in the truth of the gospel, trusting in the sovereign grace and power of God, we must keep standing firm. God is still in control, and we

must not waver or shrink back! For in God’s strength, and by His truth we shall prevail. So we shall prove ourselves to be “blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we appear as lights in the world.”



February Birthdays



Taco Supper & Game Night

The Annual Taco Supper and Game Night will be Friday, February 6th starting at 6:30 p.m. A sign-up sheet has been posted. Invite your friends to join us and bring your favorite games to play with others. “Dutch Tacos” will be available upon request for those who “need” them. See Grace De Jong for more information or to reserve your Dutch Tacos.





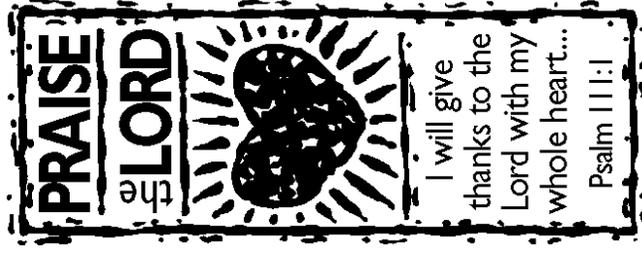
Grace OPC

February 2015

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	5	6 Taco Supper & Game Night, 6:30 p.m.	7
8 Missions Sunday <i>Meadowview Manor</i> , 3 p.m. Joint Service, 6 p.m.	9 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study</i> , 1:30 p.m.	10 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	11 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	12	13	14 Men's Leadership Breakfast, 7:00 a.m.
15	16 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	17	18 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	19	20 Men's Retreat at Green Lake	21 Men's Retreat at Green Lake
22 Lord's Supper (p.m.)	23 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study</i> , 1:30 p.m.	24	25 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	26	27	28



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Pine Haven Fundraiser

Pine Haven Women's Auxiliary is having a fundraiser at Texas Roadhouse at 4304 Gander Road. On Tuesday, February 24th, come in between 4:00—10:00 p.m. and 10% of your total food purchases will be donated to benefit the residents of Pine Haven Christian Communities, when you present the fundraising flyer. Flyers are located on the shelf in the hallway.



Book Review

by Carla De Master

The Gospel of John, a 5 Volume commentary by James Montgomery Boice

Noticing Lynn Baatz used this commentary in leading our Monday a.m. Bible study, I found in Ivan's study, copies of the same. 270 chapters and 3 notebooks later, I can testify to the richness of pursuing this in depth look at the life of our Savior. Even the titles of the books tell the progression:

1. The Coming of the Light (Chapters 1-4)
2. Christ and Judaism (5-8)
3. Those Who Received Him (9-12)
4. Peace in Storm (13-17)
5. Triumph through Tragedy (18-21)

J.M. Boice is an author for all people. These are sermons used in the congregation of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. They are easily understood and always have an application for today.

If you don't have a room full of theological books in your house, try the church library. Ask your librarian what she would recommend. There are commentaries there too.

Keep growing! God will bless you in your reading!



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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Spurgeon Corner

“His bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.”
(Genesis 49:24)

That **strength** which God gives to his Josephs is *real strength*; it is not a boasted valour, a fiction, a thing of which men talk, but which ends in smoke; it is true—*divine strength*. Why does Joseph stand against temptation? Because God gives him aid. There is nought that we can do without the power of God. All true **strength** comes from “the mighty God of Jacob.” Notice in what a *blessedly familiar way* God gives this **strength** to Joseph—“The arms of his hands were made **strong** by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.” Thus God is represented as putting his hands on Joseph’s hands, placing his arms on Joseph’s arms. Like as a father teaches his children, so the Lord teaches them that fear him. He puts his arms upon them. Marvelous condescension! God Almighty, Eternal, Omnipotent, stoops from his throne and lays his hand upon the child’s hand, stretching his arm upon the arm of Joseph, that he may be made **strong**! This **strength** was also covenant **strength**, for it is ascribed to “the mighty *God of Jacob*.” Now, wherever you read of the God of Jacob in the Bible, you should remember the covenant with Jacob. Christians love to think of God’s covenant. All the power, all the grace, all the blessings, all the mercies, all the comforts, all the things we have, flow to us from the well-head, through the covenant. If there were no covenant, then we should fail indeed; for all grace proceeds from it, as light and heat from the sun. No angels ascend or descend, save upon that ladder which Jacob saw, at the top of which stood a covenant God. Christian, it may be that the archers have sorely grieved you, and shot at you, and wounded you, but still your bow abides in **strength**; be sure, then, to ascribe all the glory to Jacob’s God.



Evening, February 22, by C. H. Spurgeon

Joint Service

The Annual Joint Service with Bethel, Calvary & Grace OPC will be held on Sunday, February 8th at 6:00 p.m. at Calvary OPC. The offering will go towards Pine Haven Christian Communities. A joint choir rehearsal will be held at Calvary on Feb. 1st at 2:00 p.m. for those who wish to participate. Since Grace is the host church this year, if you’d like to donate some refreshments for the time afterwards, sign up on the bulletin board at church!

